


<b>LAS VEGAS POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>OPERATIONS</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b> <b>Special Operations / Search and Rescue</b>	<b>NUMBER: OPR.6</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> <b>24 October 2011</b>	<b>REVIEW DATE:</b> <b>11 October 2011</b>
<b>AMENDS/SUPERSEDES:</b> <b>9 September 2010</b>	<b>APPROVED:</b>  <b>Chief of Police Christian Montano</b>
<b>NMMLEPSC STANDARDS:</b> <b>OPR.06.01-OPR.06.05</b>	<b>NMSA:</b>

**I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the efficient and effective management of the Special Operations/Search and Rescue function by providing administrative guidance that identifies the responsibilities and special operations/search and rescue processes within the uniform and other components of the department.

**II. POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Las Vegas Police Department to manage the function of a Special Operation /Search and Rescue in an effective and efficient manner by coordinating the efforts of uniform and other organizational components in this policy.

**III. APPLICABILITY:**

This policy is applicable to all commissioned and non-commissioned employees of the Las Vegas Police Department.

**IV. REFERENCES:**

- A. Las Vegas Police Department
- B. New Mexico Law Enforcement Accreditation OPR .06.05
- C. Amber Alert Law, House Bill 16, signed April 1, 2003
- D. Amber Alert , New Mexico Broadcasters Association Revision "E", March 22, 2002

**V. DEFINITION:**

- A. Missing person: A missing person is one who, not being the subject of a lawful commitment order, is absent from his/her normal whereabouts in breach of the reasonable expectations and/or responsibilities of another by reason of abduction, altered state of consciousness or voluntary decision, and whose location is either not known or, if known, who is illegally detained.

B. Runaway: a minor who has left home without permission

C. Amber Alert: is a child abduction alert bulletin in several countries throughout the world, issued upon the suspected abduction of a child. AMBER is officially a acronym for "America's Missing: Broadcasting Emergency Response" but was originally named for Amber Hagerman, a 9-year-old child riding her bike up and down her street who was abducted and murdered in Arlington, Texas in 1996.

## VI. PROCEDURE:

To insure that all citizens regardless of age, creed, color, religion, sexual orientation, that are missing and fall under one of the following categories: lost person of sound mind, lost person of confused mind, abducted person, absent friend, runaway from unsatisfactory non-domestic situation, institutional absconder; officers shall with supervisor approval take prudent measures as needed and use resources as needed to search for and as needed rescue the individual.

### A. General:

1. No waiting period exists before taking a missing persons report. Further, the initial report may be taken in person or by telephone.
2. A person is considered missing when his or her whereabouts is unknown and knowledgeable persons regard the disappearance as unusual or uncharacteristic.
3. The missing person report may be deemed critical if the officer taking the report has reason to suspect
  - a. foul play or suspicious circumstances; or
  - b. the missing person may be unable to safeguard or look out for him/herself, regardless of age; or
  - c. a risk of suicide; or
  - d. a risk of accident (while boating or swimming, for example); or
  - e. the missing person is a mental patient who may endanger him or herself or others; or the missing person suffers from a physical or mental incapacity that may be life threatening if not under care.
4. A report of a missing juvenile should not be assumed to be a runaway unless investigation yields this finding.

B. Preliminary investigation:

The officer or other report taker shall gather the following information for every missing persons report:

1. Name, age, physical description of missing person.
2. Relationship of reporting party to the missing person.
3. Time and place of the missing person's last known location and the identity of anyone in the missing person's company.
4. Behavior of the missing person, including whether the person has gone missing before, and relevant habits or patterns.
5. Recent history of problems or trauma such as illness, domestic violence, substance abuse, history of mental illness, use of prescription drugs.
6. Extent of any search for the missing person.
7. Indications of missing money or belongings.
8. Following receipt of the initial missing-person report, the **Communications Specialist** shall verify whether any of the following criteria is met. If so, information on the missing person shall be entered into NCIC. These criteria apply to persons of any age.

C. Follow-up investigation:

Following the preliminary missing-person report, the supervisor may direct a search, if necessary. A follow-up inquiry may include the following steps.

1. If the missing person is a child should (with a parent's permission and under their supervision) search the child's home, as appropriate.
2. Obtain fingerprints and dental records.
3. Contact the office of the medical examiner and local hospitals for injured or deceased persons meeting the description of the missing person.
4. Conduct interviews with persons who were in the area where the missing person was last seen, or who may work in or frequent the area.
5. Conduct interviews with co-workers, family, friends, schoolmates, teachers, counselors, social case-workers, or others to help determine whether the missing person might have left voluntarily or was coerced against his/her will.

- a. The missing person has a proven physical or mental disability and may subject him or herself or others to danger.
- b. The missing person is in the company of another under circumstances that indicates danger.
- c. The missing person may have disappeared involuntarily under circumstances that suggest abduction or kidnapping.
- d. The missing person is an un-emancipated juvenile.

**E. Case closure:**

- 1. If a competent adult missing person is located, officers shall advise the person that he or she was the subject of a missing person investigation and
  - a. Ascertain if the person wishes his or her family or the reporting party notified of his or her whereabouts; and
  - b. Arrange to notify the reporting party or family member, if permitted.
- 2. Officers shall inform the reporting party of the well-being of the person who had been reported missing. Unless the law compels another course of action, the department shall comply with the located person's wishes not to make his or her whereabouts known.
- 3. Before closing a missing-person case, officers shall question the located person to establish the circumstances and to ensure that no criminality was involved.
- 4. Reports:
  - a. A missing-person report is retained indefinitely until the complainant cancels or clears the record or until the missing person has been located.

**F. Children**

- 1. Preliminary:
  - a. If the missing person is a child, in addition to the questions outlined above (refer to Section VI. A of this procedure, the officer must ascertain if the child:
    - 1. May be with an adult who might harm him or her;
    - 2. May have been abducted by a parent;

3. Has previously run away, threatened to do so, or has had inexplicable absences; or
  4. May be living under abusive or dysfunctional conditions.
- b. A search for the child shall examine the local neighborhood with special reference to friends' houses, libraries, banks, local stores, or parks.
- c. Schools
1. Ascertain the name and location of the school the child attends and identifying information on anyone who may be responsible for private transportation to and from the school.
  2. With the permission of school authorities and in their presence, search the child's locker. *[Note: A warrantless search of a child's locker may be impermissible. Contact the office of the District Attorney for guidance.]*
- d. Following receipt of the initial missing-person report, the **Communications Specialist** shall verify whether any of the following criteria is met. If so, information on the missing person shall be entered into NCIC. These criteria apply to persons of any age.
- e. Amber Alerts
1. If abduction of a child by a stranger is suspected, Communications Specialist or the Officer (dependent upon the situation) shall contact the New Mexico State Police for the Amber Alert.
  2. General Guidelines for Amber Alert
    - a. There must be evidence of a non-family abduction of a child.
    - b. The child must be seventeen (17) years of age or less.
    - c. Specific information concerning the child and or abductor should be available.
    - d. There should be no doubt to believe that the child is in imminent danger or serious bodily harm or death.
  3. Deactivation Procedure
    - a. Only the authorized requestor may determine the validity of a request to terminate an active Amber Alert. They will consider the following when making that determination



- b. If the child has been located and confirmed safe then the NCIC entry will be removed with a supplemental report.
- c. The authorized requestor and the investigating agency are the only personnel who can cancel an amber alert after an (8) hour period

2. Follow-up investigation:

Following the preliminary missing-person report, the supervisor may direct a search, if necessary. A follow-up inquiry may include the following steps.

- a. If the missing person is a child should (with a parent's permission and under their supervision) search the child's home, as appropriate.
- b. Obtain fingerprints and dental records.
- c. Contact the office of the medical examiner and local hospitals for injured or deceased persons meeting the description of the missing person.
- d. Conduct interviews with persons who were in the area where the missing person was last seen, or who may work in or frequent the area.
- e. Conduct interviews with co-workers, family, friends, schoolmates, teachers, counselors, social case-workers, or others to help determine whether the missing person might have left voluntarily or was coerced against his/her will.

3. Case closure:

- a. When a missing child has been located, officers shall ensure that medical care is provided immediately, as appropriate.
  - b. Question the child about the circumstances of his or her disappearance and identify any persons who may be criminally responsible or whether an abusive or negligent home environment contributed to the child's disappearance.
  - c. Officers and/or Communications Specialists shall complete the appropriate clearing reports and insure that the located child is removed from NCIC.
- 1. If the missing person is a juvenile, the record shall be maintained until cleared, cancelled, the child has been located, or until the child reaches 18 years of age.

**F. SPECIAL OPERATIONS:**

1. The Las Vegas Police Department does not employ a full time Special Weapons and Tactics Unit.
2. In the event of :
  - a. Stand off
  - b. Hostage situation
  - c. Barricaded subject etc.

The New Mexico State Police SWAT Team may be called in to assist.

3. Assistance Call Out will be requested by the Chief of Police or his Designee.
4. Supervisor or Commander on call will brief SWAT Team Commander and coordinate operations.
5. After scene is deemed safe Las Vegas Police Department will take over scene and continue investigation process.
6. The Las Vegas Police Department does maintain a Raid Entry Team.
7. Deployment of the Raid Entry Team is to supplement other operational components of Field Operations Division, Criminal Investigations Division, Region IV Narcotics Task Force, and in mutual aid for other Law Enforcement Agencies as approved by the Chief of Police or designee. Further the Raid Entry Team may be deployed for other operations as approved by the Chief of Police or designee.
8. Coordination and cooperation between the Raid Entry Team and other operational components will be through the appointed Commander for the Raid Entry Team as approved by the Chief of Police.
9. The Chief of Police may impose the following criteria for selection of officers assigned to the Raid Entry Team as follows:
  - a. Assignment to the Raid Entry team is voluntary.
  - b. Officers must have a minimum of two years law enforcement experience.
  - c. Must pass a physical fitness and agility test.
  - d. Must have recommendation by their supervisor.
  - e. Must have a good work history with the department.
  - f. Upon assignment, the officer must receive specialized training in Raid Entry Tactics, I.E. SWAT Basic course, Active Shooter Course, DEA School ect., within one year.

10. Open positions for the Raid Entry Team will be posted. All qualified and interested officers have an equal opportunity to apply for this assignment.
11. The Las Vegas Police Department will provide specialized equipment for use in its operations and may issue such specialized equipment for storage at home, in agency assigned vehicles or have accessibility in some other location.

**VII. ATTACHMENTS:**

**None**